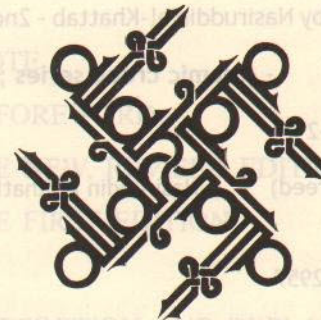


IN THE NAME OF
ALLAH
THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE ALL-MERCIFUL



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BELIEF IN ALLAH

In the Light of the Qur'an and Sunnah

'Umar S. al-Ashqar

Translated by:

Nasiruddin al-Khattab

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

All Praise is due to Allah (ﷻ), the Exalted, the Lord of the universe. Blessings and peace be upon the last of the Prophets and messengers, Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah, his family, Companions and those who follow his foot-prints till the end of this world.

Belief in Allah, the One, the Only, the Supreme, is the very core of the Islamic Creed. All aspects of Islamic life, socio-economic, political, international, etc., relations centre round the belief in One Allah.

Professor Dr. Al-Ashqar like all his books on creed ('aqeedah) series and others has dealt at length and has augmented his book with all possible materials available to him along with the basic and primary sources - the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the last Messenger (ﷺ) (Blessings and Peace be upon him). Professor Al-Ashqar has dealt with all aspects of the concept, proofs of existence, real concept, deviations, theo-philosophical schools, impacts etc.

Without doubt, the book in its present form is unique and deserve all praise.

May Allah bless our efforts in bringing out this book in a number of languages. This English edition, we believe, will go a long way to enlighten the English speaking readers. May He (ﷻ), accept this work and may it be a source of guidance for those who seek enlightenment.

Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Muhsin Al Tuwaijri

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which came from Allah, the Almighty, and from His Messenger. If Allah takes my soul before I am able to correct the mistakes, then I say the same as Imam ash-Shaafa'i (may Allah have mercy on him) said: "If a hadith is *ṣaḥeeḥ* (sound), then that is my *madhhab* (school of thought - my way). If you see that what I said goes against what the Messenger of Allah said, then cast my view aside."

We will publish other works in this series, dealing with other principles of '*aqeedah* in the same manner, *Insha Allah* (Allah Willing). I ask Allah (ﷻ), the All-Glorious, to help me say and do the right thing. There is no power and no strength except with Allah, the Exalted.

'Umar Sulaymaan 'Abdullah al-Ashqar

INTRODUCTION

1- '*AQEEDAH*: DEFINITION AND EXPLANATION

1) '*Aqeedah*: Meaning and Usage

The word '*aqeedah* and related words are constantly repeated by people in their everyday conversations. So we hear them saying "*Ana a'taqid kadha* (I believe such and such)," "*Foolaan 'aqeedatuhu ḥasanah* (So and so's belief is sound)," "The Islamic '*aqeedah* is the strongest cause for the great Islamic victories in every time and place," "The war between us and the Jews is in fact an ideological war (*ḥarb 'aqaa'idiyah*)" and so on.

What do people mean by the word '*aqeedah* (faith)? What does this word mean in Arabic? What is the concept of '*aqeedah* (faith) in Islam?

'*Aqaa'id* (plural of '*aqeedah*) are the things which people's hearts affirm and believe in, the things that they accept (as true). These are matters which are held as certain beliefs, with no taint of doubt.¹

'*Aqd al-ḥabl* (tying the rope) means tying one part to another part, as opposed to untying it. In Arabic, the meanings of the word '*aqd* revolve around ideas of adherence, certainty and affirmation. There is *aayah* (verse) in the Qur'an:

¹ *Risaalat al-'Aqaa'id* by Shaykh Hasan al-Banna. See *Majmoo' ar-Rasaa'il*, 429. The Muslim scholars of earlier and recent times have discussed the issues of this branch of knowledge under the heading of *Al-'Aqaa'id*, although the word '*aqeedah* is not mentioned in the Book of Allah or in the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ).

He does not know what his ultimate destiny will be, and man's ultimate fate concerns him. He wants to be reassured about that destiny. We see the poet's pain, because he does not know where his ultimate destiny lies and what will become of him. He is misguided from the truth, his heart is filled with misery and laden with worry and grief. His wonderings have exhausted him. How many people there are in this world who are like this misguided, miserable poet! Some of them are able to express their misery and confusion, whilst others feel and suffer, but their thoughts remain trapped in their miserable souls.

"I know not," is the response to these eternal questions. These are not the words of this poet alone. Socrates, the thinker who is viewed as one of the giants of philosophy, clearly stated, "The thing that I still do not know about is the fact that I do not know."⁷ Indeed, scepticism/agnosticism (in Arabic, *laa adriyah*, lit. "not knowing") is an ancient school of philosophical thought.

Only through the guidance of Islam does man learn where he came from, where he is going, why the universe exists, and what his role is in this universe. He knows that in truth, and there is a great difference between those who know and those who do not know:

﴿ أَفَمَنْ يَمْشِي مُكِبًّا عَلَى وَجْهِهِ أَهْدَىٰ أَمَّنْ يَمْشِي سَوِيًّا عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴾ ﴿٢٢﴾

«Is he who walks prone [without seeing] on his face, more rightly guided, or he who [sees and] walks upright on the Straight Way [i.e. Islamic Monotheism]?»

(Qur'an 67: 22)

⁷ Ad-Deen by Ad-Darraaz, 69.

2 - THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN 'AQEEDAH AND EEMAAN, AND SHARI'AH

1) The Relationship Between 'Aqeedah and Eemaan

In the Qur'an, Allah, the Exalted, praises *eemaan* (faith) and the people of *eemaan*, in *aayaat* (verses) such as the following:

﴿ قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴾ ﴿١﴾

«Successful indeed are the believers.» (Qur'an 23: 1)

﴿ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴾ ﴿٥﴾

«They are on [true] guidance from their Lord, and they are the successful.» (Qur'an 2: 5)

Allah (ﷻ), promised them Paradise:

﴿ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴾ ﴿١١﴾

«These are indeed the inheritors, who shall inherit the *Firdaus* [Paradise]. They shall dwell therein forever.» (Qur'an 23: 10-11)

The *eemaan* (faith) for which Allah praised people was not only '*aqeedah* (belief). '*Aqeedah* formed the foundation and basis of *eemaan* (firm belief). So *eemaan* is the '*aqeedah* which is established firmly in the heart, clings to it and never departs from it. It is verbally declared and pronounced by the believer in whose heart this '*aqeedah* takes firm roots. His belief and declaration are confirmed by his actions conforming to the dictates of that '*aqeedah*.

Belief that takes roots in the heart but has no visible manifestation is an empty and cold belief that does not deserve to be called '*aqeedah*. We see many people who know the truth, but they do not abide by it

Thirdly: He must affirm that Allah alone is the only One to be worshipped, with no partner or associate, and reject anything else that is worshipped instead of Him.

Fourthly: He should look at the history of belief in Divinity and examine what has been said on this topic.

CHAPTER ONE

EVIDENCE OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE CREATOR

1 - THE FIRST PROOF: THE EVIDENCE OF THE *FITRAH* (HUMAN INSTINCT)

Sound Human Instinct Bears Witness to the Existence of Allah Without (Any Need for Further) Evidence

The Qur'an does not discuss at length the matter of proving the existence of Allah (ﷻ), because it states that sound human instinct, and minds that are not contaminated with the filth of *shirk*, affirm His existence (without any need for further evidence). Not only that, *Tawheed* or the affirmation of Divine Unity, is something which is natural and instinctive.

In the Qur'an it says:

﴿فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا يَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ...﴾ (30)

«So set you [O' Muhammad] your face towards the religion [of pure Islamic Monotheism] *Haneef* [worship none but Allah Alone]. Allah's *Fitrah* [i.e. Allah's Islamic Monotheism] with which He has created mankind. No change let there be in *Khalq-illaah* [i.e. the religion of Allah, Islamic Monotheism], that is the straight religion...» (Qur'an 30: 30)

This *fitrah* is the thing which explains the phenomenon that has been noted by those who research the history of religions, that all nations whose history has been studied have adopted gods which they have

turned to and venerated.¹

It may be said at this point, "If turning towards Allah is something natural, then people would not have worshipped different gods at different times."

The answer is, that the *fiṭrah* (natural instinct) calls man to turn towards his Creator, but man is surrounded by many other influences which make him deviate towards the worship of other gods.

Parents, writers, teachers and others instil into children's minds ideas which change and contaminate this *fiṭrah*, placing a veil over the *fiṭrah* so that they are not able to turn towards the truth.

The Messenger (ﷺ) stated that what we have referred to here is true. Bukhari and Muslim narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

"Every child is born in a state of *fiṭrah*, then his parents make him into a Jew or a Christian or a Magian."²

— He did not say that they make him Muslim, because Islam is in accordance with the *fiṭrah*.

It may be said: "If we were to leave a child with no influences to affect his *fiṭrah*, would he turn out to be a monotheist, knowing his Lord?" We say: "If the devils among men leave him alone, and do

¹ Even the communists nowadays who wanted to free themselves from the worship of gods - as they claimed - worship the founder of their Party, so you see them passing by his preserved body in Red Square on the anniversary of his death, bowing their heads in humility. They have made him a god; instead of worshipping the Creator of man they worship a dead man, may they perish! (Comment added by the author in the new, revised edition): This is what I wrote fifteen years ago. A few years ago the guards of communism destroyed their own Party and cast aside their leaders and they threw out the body of their founder just as they threw out their beliefs and ideas.

² Bukhari, 3/245, hadith no. 1385; Muslim, 4/2047, hadith no. 2658.

not contaminate his *fiṭrah*", but the devils among the jinn (*shayaateen*) will never leave him alone, as the *Shayṭaan* made a vow that he would misguide the children of Adam:

﴿ قَالَ فِعْرِيكَ لَا أُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٨١﴾ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمْ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٨٢﴾ ﴾

«[Iblees (Satan)] said: 'By Your Might, then I will surely, mislead them all, Except Your chosen slaves amongst them [i.e. faithful, obedient, true believers of Islamic Monotheism].'»

(Qur'an 38: 82-83)

The *Shayṭaan* has been given the power to reach people's hearts, as stated in the *ṣaḥeeḥ* hadith:

"The *Shayṭaan* flows in man like blood flows through his veins, and I fear that he may cast some evil - or he said, something - into both your hearts."³

The Qur'an describes the *Shayṭaan*, from whom we must seek refuge with Allah (ﷻ), as one who,

﴿ ... يُوسَّوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ ﴾

«...Whispers into the hearts of mankind.» (Qur'an 114: 5)

It is also true that every person has a hidden mate (*qareen*) from among the jinn who urges and encourages him to do evil. In the Qur'an it says:

﴿ قَالَ قَرِينُ رَبَّنَا مَا أَطَعَيْنُكَ وَلَكِنْ كُنَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴾

«His companion [Satan-devil] will say: 'Our Lord! I did not push him to transgression, [in disbelief, oppression, and evil deeds], but he was himself in error far astray.'»

(Qur'an 50: 27)

³ Muslim, 4/1712, hadith no. 2175.

From these questions it becomes clear the extent to which modern science can explain the causes and effects behind this universe. The universe is like a machine which operates beneath a cover, and we know nothing about it except the fact that it is running. "But if we lift the lid, we will see how the many parts and cogs of this machine are connected to one another, how they turn one another; we will see all the movements of this machine. But does this mean that we know who created this machine, just by looking at its parts spinning? How can our seeing the machine running be proof that the machine came into existence by itself and is running by itself?"¹¹

Nature is a force

There are those who say that nature is a force which created the universe, and that it is a living, hearing, seeing, wise and powerful force... We say to them, this is right, but your mistake is that you call this force "nature." This creative, innovative force has told us the name by which it deserves to be called, and that is "Allah." Allah has told us of His beautiful Names and sublime Attributes, so we must call Him by the names which He has called Himself, Exalted is He and All-High.

Those who came before them said something similar

Those who attribute creation to nature had Predecessors who said something very similar. These were the *Dahriyah* — the atheists — who attributed events to *Ad-Dahr* (time). They saw that children grow into adults, adults grow into old men and old men die as time goes by and night and day alternate, so they attributed life and death to time.

﴿وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ وَمَا لَهُم بِذَلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ ﴿١٤﴾﴾

¹¹ Waheeduddin Khan, *Al-Islam yatahaddaa* (Islam challenges), 29-31; he also quotes from other western scientists.

﴿And they say: 'There is nothing but our life of this world, we die and we live and nothing destroys us except *Ad-Dahr* [time]. And they have no knowledge of it, they only conjecture.﴾ (Qur'an 45: 24)

Those people attributed events to time, and these people attribute them to the nature of things; both are equally misguided.

3) Darwin's Theory ¹²

The supporters of this theory tried to use it to explain the existence of living beings. This theory is widespread; many people try to spread it with good intentions, because they think that it is a scientific fact, whilst others try to spread it with bad intentions, because it suits their desire, which is to prove religion wrong in its description of how man was created. Those who seek to undermine religion find evidence in science to support their stance and deceive people.

What does this theory say?

This theory claims that the origin of all creatures was small organisms which developed from water, then their environment changed them until new characteristics emerged in this life-form, and these characteristics, over millions of years, led to the development of more advanced characteristics which changed that primitive creature into a superior life form. This development of characteristics caused by the environment and evolution continued until it arrived at the appearance of man.

The bases of this theory

a) This theory is based on what was noted during excavations carried out during Darwin's time. They discovered that the more ancient levels contained primitive life-forms, and the levels above them

¹² Zandaani, *Kitaab at-Tawheed*, 3/81.

CHAPTER TWO DEFINITION OF ALLAH AND CONNECTING HEARTS TO HIM

INTRODUCTION

We would not have needed to discuss the previous issue at length were it not for the fact that so many doubts and specious arguments surround it that the researcher is obliged to examine their fallacy.

Now it is time for us to discuss in detail the second issue, which is the most important topic of this book, the issue which lies at the heart of the matter.

We have already stated that the Qur'an tackles this issue in two ways, to confirm this great reality:

- a) It speaks of the perfection of Allah's creation and describes the wonders of the universe which indicate the greatness of the Creator.
- b) It speaks directly of Allah, the Exalted, - His essence, names, attributes, blessings and creations. We shall endeavour - *In sha Allah* (God willing) - to discuss this in detail, and Allah (ﷻ), is the One Whose help we seek.

1 - EVIDENCE OF THE UNIVERSAL SIGNS WHICH POINT TO THE CREATOR AND INITIATOR

1) The Qur'anic Methodology in Using the Universal Signs as Evidence

i) Exploring the universe through the Qur'anic description

The Qur'an takes us on one journey after another through the horizons of the heavens and the different parts of the earth, pausing to

no strength except by Allah (ﷻ), He is sufficient for us and the best Disposer of our affairs. His help we seek, in Him we put our trust, and to Him is our final destination.”¹³⁸

This quotation makes it quite clear that the belief of Abu'l-Hasan al-Ash'ari is identical to the belief of *Ahl as-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah* concerning the names and attributes of Allah.¹³⁹

¹³⁸ See *Maqaalaat al-Islamiyeen*, Pp. 290-297. We have quoted only that which has to do with the attributes of Allah; we have not quoted the rest of the beliefs of *Ahl as-Sunnah* and *Ahl al-Hadeeth* of which he approved.

¹³⁹ I have also written a book describing the belief and methodology of Abu'l-Hasan al-Ash'ari.

CHAPTER THREE THE ONENESS OF ALLAH (TAWHĪD)¹

1 - MEANINGS AND CATEGORIES

Allah (ﷻ) is One in His Essence. There is nothing like unto Him and He has no equal. Exalted be He above having a wife or son.

﴿قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ﴾

«Say [O' Muhammad]: He is Allah, [the] One. *Allah-us-Ṣamad* [Allah — the Self-Sufficient Master, Whom all creatures need, (He neither eats nor drinks)]. He begets not, nor was He begotten. And there is none co-equal or comparable unto Him.» (Qur'an 112: 1-4)

Allah (ﷻ) is described with attributes of perfection, and none of His creatures resemble Him in any of His attributes:

﴿...لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهِ شَيْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ﴾

«...There is nothing like Him, and He is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.» (Qur'an 42: 11)

¹ True *Tawhīd* is the belief in the Oneness (unity) of Allah, His Oneness in His Essence and Attributes, and worshipping Him alone with no partner or associate. This concept has been distorted. Some people claim that *Tawhīd* dictates denying the attributes of Allah, because these attributes - or so they say - make the Eternal more than one. Some *Ṣufis* claim that the *Tawhīd* to which we refer here is the “*Tawhīd* for the masses” and that the *Tawhīd* of the elite is that which is proven through the *ḥaqaa'iq* (mystical “realities”). They even claim that there is a *Tawhīd* for the elite of the elite. All of that is misguidance.